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A
CENTURY SERMON:

DELIVERED IN PHILADELPHIA,

AT THE OPENING

OF THE

PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION,

October 6th, 1807.

BY SAMUEL JONES D. D.

PASTOR OF THE BAPTIST CHURCH IN LOWER DUBLIN,
PENNSYLVANIA.

Published at the request of the Association.


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CENTURY SERMON

DELIVERED BY

THE

OF THE

UNITED METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

ON

BY SAMUEL JOHNS D. D.

PASTOR OF THE METHODIST CHURCH IN NEW YORK

PRELIMINARY

TO THE

PREFACE

THE FIRST OF THE SERIES OF SERMONS
PUBLISHED BY THE METHODIST BOOK CONCERN

1851

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A

CENTURY SERMON.

ENLARGE THE PLACE OF THY TENTS, AND LET THEM STRETCH FORTH THE CURTAINS OF THY HABITATIONS; SPARE NOT, LENGTHEN THY CORDS, AND STRENGTHEN THY STAKES; FOR THOU SHALT BREAK FORTH ON THE RIGHT HAND AND ON THE LEFT.—Isaiah, liv. 2, 3.

I HAVE had it on my mind, that it would be proper for me, before I proceed, to confess openly that I am not going to preach but to read. You may therefore perhaps have remarked, that in addressing the throne of grace I have not dared to ask for assistance in this part of the service. I must however observe, that I think reading is admissible on particular occasions, especially such as the present, when the chief of what is to be said is to be historical; yet such historical facts, as have some relation to religion.

After saying this much I need not now be at any pains to conceal my notes.

I had some thoughts of committing the whole to memory, but I did not like it very well, because I should seem to act the part of a school boy, or, what would be worse, to play the hypocrite, by pretending to do what I did not. I shall only add in this way that for the present I shall omit the notes, to preserve the thread of discourse. I will now enter on the subject before us.

Enlarge the place of thy tents, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitations; spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen the stakes; for thou shall break forth on the right hand and on the left.

These are the words of the elegant and sublime Isaiah, who, on account of the clearness of the discoveries made to him of the gospel day, obtained the name of the evangelic prophet. Indeed in some places his predictions have the air of an history, rather than a prophecy. As Chap. 7, 14, 9, 6, 7, 50, 6, 53. passim.

The passage before us refers to the implantation of the gospel among the Gentiles. It began to be accomplished in the days of the Apostles, and has been fulfilling in all ages of the Christian church to this day, and will continue so to be to the commencement of the millenium. Their sound, says the Apostle, went into all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world. Rom. 10. 18.

But we are now to speak more particularly of the work of the Lord, and the spread of religion in our Society during the last century, and especially within the bounds of this Association: to shew that there has been a fulfilment of the prophecy in the text among us; that we have enlarged the places of our tents, and stretched forth the curtains of our habitations; have lengthened our cords, and strengthened our stakes, because we have broke forth, on the right hand, and on the left.

We shall now then apply ourselves, in the first place, to take into view what relates to our body, within the time under consideration.

This association originated in what they called general, and sometimes yearly meetings. These meetings were instituted so early as 1688, and met alternately in May and September, at Lower Dublin, Philadelphia, Salem, Cohansey, Chester, and Burlington; at which places there were members, though no church or churches constituted, except Lower Dublin and Cohansey. At these meetings their labour was chiefly confined to the ministry of the word, and the administration of gospel ordinances. But in the year 1707 they seem to have taken more properly the form of an Association; for then they had delegates from several churches, and attended to their general concerns. We therefore date our beginning as an Association from that time, though

we might, with but little impropriety, extend it back some years.

They were at this time but a feeble Band, though a band of faithful brothers; consisting of but five churches. The church at Lower Dublin, Piscataway, Middletown, Cohansey, and Welsh-Tract. There were at that time but these five in North America, except Massachusetts and Rhode-Island.*

Here it may not be amiss to take some notice of the first ministers in succession in each of the constituent churches, as a brief memorial of those venerable fathers, that were the instruments of propagating the gospel in these parts of the new world.

The church of Lower Dublin had for their first minister Rev. Elias Keach, Son of the memorable Benjamin Keach of London. He, returning to England in 1692, was succeeded by the noted John Watts, who departed this life in the year 1702, in the midst of his days and growing usefulness; the fortieth year of his age, and twelfth of his ministry. So was the will of God. After him they had Samuel Jones, Evan Morgan, and Joseph Wood; and in the year 1712 came over sea by invitation, Abel Morgan, who had been pastor of a

* When the first Church in New-Port, Rhode-Island was one hundred years old, in 1738, Mr. John Callender their Minister delivered and published a Sermon on the occasion. It principally relates to the civil and religious affairs of that Province in connection with the other New-England Provinces.

church at Blaene Gerent in South Wales. He is said to have been indefatigable and abundantly useful in his ministry. He supplied Lower Dublin and Philadelphia, besides visiting other places. He wrote and published the first Welsh concordance of the holy Scriptures, that ever was published in that language. This good man was called home to reap the fruit of his Labour, and much lamented, in the year 1722.

Piscataway had Thomas Killingsworth, Mr. Drake, Henry Loyal, and Benjamin Stille Senior.

Middletown had James Aston, James Brown, Elias Keach, Thomas Killingsworth, John Burrows, and the incomparable Abel Morgan.

Cohansey had Thomas Killingsworth, Timothy Brooks, William Boucher, and Nathaniel Jenkins.

The last of the five was the church of the Welsh-Tract, who had for their first Minister Thomas Griffith. He came to this country from Wales with the church, for they were constituted there, and was very useful among them to the day of his death, which came to pass in the year 1725. He was succeeded by Elisha Thomas and Enoch Morgan. Besides the above, this church was blessed with four others at the same time, that were men of first rate abilities. Jenkin Jones, who became minister of Lower Dublin and then of Philadelphia; Owen Thomas, who settled at Vincent.

in Chester County; David Davis, who succeeded Enoch Morgan at the Welsh-Tract; and above all the great Abel Morgan, who moved to Middletown. These were men of shining talents, with whom we have had few if any since, that will bear a comparision.

I will take liberty to mention as the cotemporary of the above, the late Rev. Benjamin Griffith of Montgomery, who, though he was not of one of the constituent churches, nor distinguished for ministerial abilities, yet was eminent in council, and perhaps more so for the use of his pen.

Under appointment of the Association he wrote our first discipline; and then, a brief account of the first seventeen churches in our connection, which he entered in the Association book, together with their most material transactions to the year 1758.

I will add in this way, that a junior class came forward in the churches, who were in a pretty high degree eminent in their day: as John Davis of Harford in Maryland, yet living, aged 86, Robert Kelsay of Cohansey, Peter Peterson Vanhorn of Lower Dublin, Isaac Eaton of Hopewell, Mr. Walton of Moristown, Isaac Stille, junior of Piscataway, Benjamin Miller of Scot's-Plains, and John Gano of New York. These were burning and shining lights, especially the three last. May the God of Elijah grant that a double portion

of their Spirit may rest on all, that stand as watchmen on Zion's walls.

We have mentioned that our number of churches at first was but five. As the Country increased in population, our number, through the blessing of God on the faithful and zealous ministry of the word, has increased to 38, comprehending 3556 communicants. But we should doubtless be more than treble that number, if we had not detached churches on all sides, to form five or six other Associations,* that may be denominated our daughters, while some of them, again, have dismissed churches to form still other Associations, that stand, as it were in the relation of grand daughters.

Now if we suppose, that there are three hearers in a congregation for every communicant in the church, it will give us above 10,000 hearers; and as there does not half the number in the family, on an average, attend public worship, on account of age, infirmities, &c. &c. It will follow, that the population within our bounds must be above 20,000, and above 80,000, taking in the detachments.

Thus have we spread to the North and South, to the East and West, and have

* Ketoc-ton, Readstone, Baltimore, Delaware, New-York, and Warwick.

To form the Readstone Association I think we dismissed no Churches; but several of our Ministers settled in those parts, and were instrumental in forming it.

the text abundantly verified among us. Doubtless it is the Lord's doings, and to him be all the glory.

It may now be proper to extend our views to our brethren in other parts of the Union: for the work of the Lord was far from being confined to our bounds. He, who gave the word, attended it also with power, and great was the company of those that published it.

But here we are at a loss for want of information; had there been attention paid to the circular address of your Committee of correspondence, appointed five years ago; it might be in our power to lay before you a correct statement, of what would be both agreeable, entertaining and useful: as it is, we are left to wander in the dark by the aid of uncertain conjecture.

Mr. Asplund, mentioned in the above address, to his immortal honour, has given us, at a great expense of labour, a particular account of our state and number, at that time, in the United States, which he collected in his travels from characters on the spot, that were competent to give him correct information. But this was done seventeen years ago. Great changes have taken place since. We shall however make use of his calculation for our ground work, and build thereon by a reasonable allowance for those changes.

It appears from him, that the number of members, or communicants, belonging to our

society in the several states at that time, was 65233. If we add for the Menonists, Dunkers, and Universalists the moderate sum of 4767, we shall have the round number of 70000.

This was their number seventeen years ago. What may it be now? As we have good reason to think there are in some of the states more than three communicants for every one there was seventeen years ago, one would think we might very safely, for all the states, double the number that there were then: but we will only add three fourths, which must be allowed to be very moderate. This will give us 122500 for the present number of communicants throughout the United States.

Now as the number of communicants in a church are to the number of hearers in a congregation nearly as one to three; multiplying the aforesaid number of communicants by three we shall have 367500 for the present number of hearers.

This must be below the mark. For there were seventeen years ago, above seventy churches, that had but from eight to twenty communicants each, who, beyond all doubt, had of hearers not only three times their respective numbers of communicants, but more than ten times. This may serve to shew, we do not wish to exaggerate.

And farther, as we observed awhile ago, since on account of age, infirmity, &c. there does not half a family, on an average, attend

public worship, by multiplying the last number by two we shall have 735000 for our present population, which is about one eighth part of the whole population in the Union.

It ought to be remembered, that we have not brought into the account the multitudes, that are fully convinced in favour of our religious principles and practice, and are ready to burst the bands of the prejudice of education, their connections, &c. &c. which are doubtless very binding and strong. But when the small still voice of the Spirit of God shall follow the light of knowledge they have received, and whisper in the ear of conscience; and in the mean time the constraining love of God shall be shed abroad in their hearts, we may expect to receive them with joy.

It may also not be amiss to observe, that this remarkable increase, of which we have been speaking, has been chiefly within the last fifty years, and much greater in those states, where oppression for conscience sake has been the most severe, except the state of New-York.

In Virginia I think there was not one church of our denomination in the year 1760; in 1790, only thirty years after, there were two hundred and two. In Massachusetts previous to 1755, there were, as far as I can find, but seven

churches, now there are one hundred and ninety-four.*

In the State of New-York there are now I imagine, one hundred and fifty churches; previous to 1770 there were but very few.

It is with pleasure I observe, that oppression on account of religion has in Virginia totally ceased; and in Massachusetts also has greatly abated.

When the first Congress met in this city, I was one of a committee under the appointment of your body, that, in company with the late Rev. Isaac Backus† of Massachusetts, met the delegates in Congress from that state, in yonder State House, to see if we could not obtain some security for that liberty, for which we were then fighting and bleeding by their side. It seemed unreasonable to us, that we should be called upon to stand up with them

* Rev. John Callender in his afore-cited centurial-discourse for Rhode-Island p. 58. mentions from Bishop Sanderson, that the Rev. Arch-bishop Whitgift, and the learned Hooker, men of great judgment and fame in their times, did long since foresee and declare their fear, that if ever Puritanism should prevail, it would soon draw in Anabaptism after it. That Anabaptism had its rise from the same principles, the Puritans held, especially that *one Principle*, that the Scripture was the only and all sufficient rule of faith and practice, so as nothing might lawfully be done, without express warrant, either from some command or example therein contained.

† This great and good man was dismissed from his labour below to wear a crown of glory above on the 20th of November, 1806, in the 83d year of his Age, and 60th of his ministry.

in defence of liberty, if after all it was to be, liberty for one party to oppress another.

But our endeavours availed us nothing. One of them, told us, that if we meant to effect a change in their measures respecting religion, we might as well attempt to change the course of the sun in the heavens.

Should any be ready to inquire, if we are so numerous as just now mentioned, and of course entitled to about twenty seats in the general legislature, how comes it to pass, that we seldom have more than three, four, or five? This is easily accounted for by observing, that being scattered and dispersed among those of other societies, and every were in the minority, we cannot have a chance to rise, if we had ambition. To which may be added; that as we are generally of the middle class, agreeable to Augur's prayer, and, the Apostle observes, not many mighty, not many noble are called. Those considerations will fully account for the fact. But if we cannot obtain seats for ourselves, we can however give them to others. For doubtless, casting our weight into the political scale must have an effect in turning the beam. This it is thought has actually been the case within a few years past.

Perhaps some, in accounting for this circumstance, will be ready to mention the want of information among us. Be it so. There may be something in it. But suppose I should suggest a more probable reason.

Having been persecuted and oppressed, suffered imprisonment and alienation of property; it is but reasonable to expect, we should be very jealous of our religious liberty, which indeed is the case: and it has been thought by many that the rights of conscience are safer, in the hands of those, who care but little for religion of any kind, than in the hands of zealots, devoted to the interest of a particular sect.*

Let it not be said, that this zeal for religious liberty cannot take place, where persecution has not been felt. For the report of it is gone every where and although it has not every where excited alarm, yet it has sympathy. And then the thing itself is so horrible: to invade the rights of the Deity, to compel people

* An historian observes, that the worst of men made the best Emperors for heretics. In regard to the correctness of this maxim, the writer has not the least doubt. Nevertheless, as it may seem strange to some pious minds, that the wicked should be set upon high, and preferred to the religious, he begs them to consider.

First, that by those, who care but little about religion, is not meant the profane, nor those who are professed enemies to revelation, who it is expected, will never be raised to dignified stations by the people in this country.

Secondly, that there may not be clear evidence, that a zealot has any real religion, though he bears the name.

Thirdly, suppose he should have real religion, and be elevated to the first office in the union, what security can the people have, that he will be possessed of such firmness of mind, as to direct his own councils, and escape the influence of religionists, or clergy, with whom he will be encompassed, and who have never been thought to be over favourable to equal rights and free inquiry in matters of religion.

In unison is the observation of the historian "The worst of men made the best Emperors for hereticks." i. e. for dissenters from the ruling party. Rob. Eccles. Researches. p. 74.

to obey man rather than God, to do what they verily believe they ought not, and to pay for what they never had nor wish to have; every feeling of the moral sense, to go no farther, rises against it.

It has been often said, that all parties will persecute when they have the power. This may be admitted as a general rule; but I am bold to aver that the Baptists are an exception. They have had the power in Rhode-Island,* if not in Portland: but not a single instance can be produced of their abuse of that power any where.†

Hoping you will excuse these few political observations, I will now go on to what may be more agreeable.

We would not be understood to suppose, that the work of the Lord has been confined to our Society. We occupy but a small part

* Rev. John Callender in his aforesaid discourse. p. 103. Speaking of Rhode-Island has these words; Liberty of conscience was the basis of this colony. Our fathers thought it just and necessary, to allow each other mutually, to worship God as their consciences were respectively persuaded: they thought no man had power over the Spirit of God, and that the duty of the magistrate was to leave every one to follow the light of his conscience. They were willing to exhibit to the world an instance, that liberty of conscience was consistent with the public peace, and the flourishing of a civil common-wealth, as well as that christianity can subsist without compulsion. And he might have added, that it could subsist a great deal better without than with.

† When the Quakers in Pennsylvania did something like persecuting the Keithians, Holme, a Baptist Judge or Justice, on the bench, opposed it. Vide Mr. Edward's Matt. Vol. 1st. p. 56.

of the Lord's vineyard: and we rejoice, that there are so many others engaged with us in spreading and promoting the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour.

About the middle of the century a glorious revival took place and spread through the states, wherein that eminent servant of the Lord, Rev. George Whitefield, bore a conspicuous part; he was a blessed instrument in the hand of the Lord, both in commencing and spreading that wonderful work.

This revival had an happy effect, not only in bringing many thousands out of the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God's dear Son; but also in being the means of introducing into the ministry, many pious zealous dispensers of the word, especially among Presbyterians in the middle states, and the Congregationalists in the eastern. Without detracting from the merit of those who have appeared since in the ministry, we must be allowed to give a decided preference to the eminent characters that sprung up in the great day of God's power, the names of many of whom are had in precious remembrance to this day, as; the Tenants, Edwards, Burr, Davis, Findley, Treat, Beaty, Hunter, Bostwick, Rogers, Rowbold, and a long list of others, whose names have not come to our knowledge.*

* It is not here meant that those referred to, were greater than these now on the ministerial stage for natural powers of mind, much less for literary improvement; but for powerful evangelical preaching.

There have been many, and some of them very considerable revivals and seasons of refreshment since the above, and that in many, or rather in all the states, particularly in Virginia, the Carolinas, Kentucky, &c. of which we have not room to speak at large: and shall only observe that there have been within those three or four years, and even now are, considerable revivals in Taunton, Norton, Aurelius, Providence, Addison, Columbia, Stuben, Upper Canada, Marblorough, St. Andrews, Hamilton, Suffield, Bristol, Colchester, Wardsborough, Windham, Winhall, Straton, Wilmington, Grenville, Lyme, Philadelphia, Lower Dublin, Southampton and in many places in Virginia, the Carolinas, Georgia, &c. &c. wherein multitudes have been baptised. Rev. Henry Taler, in Virginia, baptised above 400 in little better than one year, 135 in one day. Glory to God for those refreshing showers of grace.

About forty years ago the Methodist society took root among us, under the labours of Messrs. Pilmore, Boardman, and many others, who, for the time, by their diligence and zeal, have certainly been very successful, at least as to respectability of numbers, and a very considerable reformation of manners, and there is reason to hope, that a real work of grace has taken place among them to a considerable extent.

The many other religious societies are also progressing in number, weight and influence;

serving we hope, our common Lord and Master, according to the light they have received; on whom, as on all, may the Lord shine, to give the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

What shall we say of the missionary spirit, that has for some years, and more especially of late, prevailed in many places, and among different societies, with a view to spread the knowledge of the gospel and the way of salvation among the heathen in various parts, as well as among Christians in places destitute of the means. Whether the latter does not merit the greater attention we pass over, with only observing, that it is thought it has been attended with more success and far less expense.*

Time would fail us to cross the Atlantic and recount the displays of divine power and grace among them, within the period we are speaking of; especially in great Britain, that favoured isle, so highly favoured particularly for the knowledge of divine things, promoted among them by the ministry of the word, and by writing. Whether with reference to the last they are not now rather stationary, since that

* The Massachusetts Baptist missionary Magazine, published quarterly, and which merits high encomium and support, gives us very pleasing intelligence of the success of missionaries east of Penobscot River, in Nova Scotia, back parts of the state of New-York, Upper Canada, &c

One of their missionaries, Rev. Isaac Case, in a short time baptised 205, and constituted six churches.

great luminary Doctor Gill has finished his course, we leave; be that as it may, it would seem that knowledge, civil and religious liberty, and with them religion itself are tending westward. With the sun they rose in the East, after a course of ages crossed the Atlantic, and it is likely will progress westward until they reach the Pacific ocean, civilizing and making happy this western hemisphere in their course.

We mentioned awhile ago the names of some in the ministry, that were eminent in their day, for talents, piety and usefulness, who now rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.

At this time also there are a not few among us in the sacred office, of distinguished worth, not so much for their literary acquirements, as for what is of infinitely more value in promoting pure and undefiled religion before God; namely, true piety, ardent zeal, ministerial gifts, and indefatigable diligence, and faithfulness in saving the souls of men and promoting the kingdom of our Redeemer.*

* The Baptists as a society, have never considered the higher branches of learning as essential to the gospel ministry, and there is no doubt but the sentiment is perfectly correct.

They have nevertheless held education in high esteem, as an hand-maid to grace, and have always had not a few among them, that ranked pretty high for literary improvement and extensive reading.

In the year 1756 the late Rev. Isaac Eaton M. A. of Hopewell in New Jersey opened a grammar school under the patronage of the Philadelphia Baptist association.

Some are Boanerges, sons of thunder, qualified to lay the axe at the root of the trees; to awaken, alarm, and strip sinners of their carnal hopes and self-dependence: while others are sons of consolation, fitted to apply the healing balm of gospel grace and mercy; to excite faith in the merits and meditation of Christ, and lead the subject of grace to rejoice in hope, fitted to build up, comfort, establish and edify

In the fall of 1763 the writer of these sheets on request repaired to Newport in Rhode-Island and new modelled a rough draught they had of a charter of Incorporation for a college, which soon after obtained legislative sanction. The summer following the institution went into operation under Rev. James Manning, President, at Warren; at which place the first commencement was held in 1769. Two years after, an elegant edifice was erected at Providence, and the institution flourished under its worthy President, the late renowned Dr. Manning, as it did since his death under President Maxy, and does now under President Mercer. At the commencement of last September, 29 were admitted to the degree of Bachelor of Arts. It is now called Brown's University, in honour of the generous Nicholas Brown, merchant of that place.

The writer kept a boarding school between 29 and 30 years at Lower Dublin, in which many were educated, that are now useful in the different learned professions.

One of them, the Rev. Dr. Allison, kept a large academy under his sole direction at Borden-Town in New Jersey, from whence issued many useful characters.

The Philadelphia Baptist Association have a fund for the education of young men promising for the gospel ministry; as have also the Charleston Association.

The Baptists in Georgia, have in contemplation to erect a college in that state, on mount Enon, at the distance of 140 miles from the Atlantic, in latitude 33 north, on an elevation of 200 feet perpendicular, accommodated with salubrious air, and two fine springs that issue out of rocks on the north and west sides.

The business is in some forwardness, as unsolicited donations already amount to about 5000 dollars. This account of Enon college bears date of December 1806.

the faithful, leading them on as a peculiar people zealous of good works; while all have a measure of all gifts, as God has distributed to all by the same spirit. Of these there are a few, especially Southward and Eastward* of us, the force of whose natural genius has raised them far above the common level, whose names, for obvious reasons, we for the present suppress, and

Hail the sons of glory when they set.

Thus when we look back, as from an eminence, on what has taken place within a small compass, in the course of the last century, in promoting the kingdom of the Messiah in the world, we see a glorious accomplishment of the prophecy in the text, and if we look forward, a still more glorious prospect lies before us.

Before another century will revolve, before another opportunity will offer, of delivering another discourse on the like occasion with the present; we hope and expect, that the latter day of glory, the spiritual reign of Christ will commence, in comparison of which, what we have seen, however glorious, can be but a prelude,—a faint shadow.

We have indeed lately seen a whole church with its ministry,† as it were a whole town,

* Of these my good and intimate friend the late Doctor Samuel Stilman of Boston was one, to whose memory, memorable as it was, Doctor Baldwin, in the funeral discourse, has done such ample justice. It would be well, if on such occasions, truth was always so strictly attended to.

† This refers to the Rev. Daniel Merrill of Maine. That of N. Dodge at Lebanon in Connecticut is not very dissimilar.

turn from will worship to the apostolic practice, in a manner with one consent. This was great and remarkable, I confess, for our day and time. But how much greater and more glorious will it be, when superstition and false colouring of scripture shall cease, when the Lord Jesus shall destroy every species of anti-Christ with the spirit of his mouth and the brightness of his coming, when his ancient people the Jews shall be brought in, together with the fullness of the gentile world; in one word, when a nation shall be born in a day. Should it enter the mind of any that this is a figurative expression, we grant it may be so: but then if it be, it is such an one as denotes something very great and glorious indeed; nor is there room to doubt, but the power of God is able to bring that saying to pass literally. May the Lord hasten and accomplish his holy purposes to the praise of his glory.

The glorious day spoken of will be the time of the *Lord's reformation*. The reformation, which has been so much gloried in was but a poor piece of business, although it has been attended with valuable consequences. The reformers shook off the Papal yoke, but in the main retained his principles and spirit. They did not establish the right of free inquiry, liberty of conscience, and the word of God as the only rule of faith and practice: but, on the other hand, opposed, restrained and suppressed every attempt to promote a thorough

reformation. They were influenced by worldly motives, connected religion with worldly establishments, were the abettors of tyranny and oppression, and even of persecution by fire and the sword. But we look for a far different reformation. The Lord will come, and will not tarry. Let us wait for him.

Having thus, my brethren, laid before you our original state, and the progress made within our compass, and then extended our views to our brethren in the Union; and having said a few words in regard to the state of religion among other societies: it may now be time to draw towards a conclusion. But, before I close, I shall take liberty to say a few words with reference to the nature of our subject.

Some may say, that we have talked too much about our numbers, and that it looks rather like boasting. I would inquire of such, whether it would not be more candid in them, to consider it as exulting in the riches of divine grace and goodness. If however we may not speak of the great things God has done for us, without being charged with boasting, then let us determine with the Apostle, that no man shall stop us of this boasting. In the Lord will we triumph, and in his salvation.

That our subject, however, is dry, and does not admit of much fervour and devotion is readily granted. It does not call for that pathos which the common subjects of the sacred desk, not only allow, but often require.

To speak of the deplorable state of man under the wrath of God, and the sentence of condemnation; to display the unsearchable riches of the grace and love of God in the way of recovery and salvation through Jesus Christ; to describe the work of the spirit in taking the things of Christ and shewing them unto us, his work of conversion and sanctification; to paint the awful process in the great day, and finally the irrecoverable perdition of the ungodly, and the glory and felicity of the righteous; these are subjects that will admit, and even call for animation. Here the preacher may well glow with ardor, and the hearer feel an interest. These subjects, when accompanied with divine power, will melt the affections, bow the will, and mend the heart.

But if our subject does not rise to the height of those now mentioned, it is nevertheless well worth while, to devote one hour, once in an hundred years at least, to review the ways and doings of God with his church and people, in accomplishing the purposes and decrees of his grace and goodness.

Such contemplation may be of advantage to us, not only for the present satisfaction, but because it tends to call forth into exercise the best powers and faculties of the soul, and to excite to action the graces of the spirit there implanted.

Here we are led to exult and triumph in his power and goodness. In this contemplation

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our gratitude, thanksgiving and praise, those heavenly exercises, will be most powerfully moved. From what has been done in the accomplishment of his promises, we are led to hope for the fulfilment of those that remain, we are led to a stedfast confidence in him, who has said, And lo I am with you always to the end of the world; and that no weapon formed against Zion shall prosper.

Every device of man to unite the church and the world must come to naught. For the redeemer has said, My kingdom is not of this world. Human schemes and policy will not long avail. The church will shortly come out of the wilderness.

In the spirit of true piety and ardent affection it is fit we should therefore join in the general chorus of the redeemed throng through all ages, saying, Come Lord Jesus, come quickly.

Let us then unite with one heart and voice in ascribing honor and glory, praise and power, might, majesty and dominion to him that sitteth on the throne, and to the lamb forever and ever. Amen.

ERRATA.

Page seven, first line—for *Gerent* read *Gwent*.

Page seventeen, seventh line—for *the great* read *that great*.

Same page, second line from the bottom, for *Rowbold* read *Rowland*.

PROPOSAL

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